

hear in the talks - actually I was tempted to go off on a riff on something

you said there to see where it went, but instead in a very pedestrian way

in going to focus instead on a very immediate aspect of our society, which I don't think I can convey <sup>sharply as I might have</sup> I shied

away from it - ~~it is~~ <sup>here</sup> so far in my lectures - and first, the point that I was

interested in not only knowing how to understand Curtis LeMay psychologically

which I am interested <sup>in, but</sup> how do we understand the society that made Curtis LeMay

and his staff and honored him every step of the way for what he was and what he did. ✓

Not because they misunderstood him, but because they understood him perfectly.

What was this society that used him - here was a man that said, "use me, and we used

him - and not only once, but over a long career, and what was this society <sup>the next point, I think</sup>

I've been inhibited - it's hard for me to come out and say. It is not a random

match between LeMay and this society. - It was America that had use for LeMay and

I don't say that because I believe, because I don't believe that the US is

<sup>peculiarly or</sup> uniquely murderous or evil or sinful in general <sup>and</sup> but I think I do know, I don't

know all the <sup>explanations</sup> information, but I do know something about this society which is not

part of our collective self-image, but is in my mind unquestionably true and can

easily be demonstrated. We are not entirely different from <sup>one other society, our</sup> mother ~~the~~ society,

England it so happens, for reasons that I couldn't explain, so what I am saying

applies to England it so happens, and there are LeMays in England, <sup>and have always been</sup> that these two

societies - England and America - have a quite peculiar and almost unique predilection ✓

for massacre from the air, for high level <sup>indiscriminate</sup> instrument bombing - a way of conducting

war. It is obvious that we are not <sup>more peculiarly</sup> particularly warlike than other countries, but

our way of conducting war <sup>has</sup> is very definite peculiarities and has been trending

in that direction since just after WWI <sup>it was</sup> and fully realized in WW II and now has ✓

an institutional basis which was almost unique in the world until, under the pressure

of <sup>the</sup> humiliations we afflicted on Russia (which did not have an institutional strategic

air command as late as 1961) they acquired one and now they have an institutional basis <sup>for this</sup>

but not the practice <sup>that we have</sup> behind. <sup>from</sup> Russian like every other country <sup>in the world</sup> except England,

lacks a history that tells it that it has won a war by bombing people - only two

countries <sup>in the world</sup> believe <sup>that of themselves</sup> it, especially in the case of England with their bombing of

German ships has a great deal of self-delusion <sup>an</sup> of almost cult-like faith. We have

more basis for saying the bombing had an effect

more basis for that in connection with Japan ~~etc~~ (I'm not talking the atomic bomb, but about fire bombing).

but we definitely do believe that <sup>we</sup> won a major war with bombing as the

theory told <sup>them</sup> us was possible. So ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> had the institution that required this faith

for its own sense of independence and <sup>work</sup> ~~were~~ fighting under services of the air force.

The institution got its way in WW II, believed that it had been predominantly

successful, and on that basis, and with a new weapon, the atom bomb, won a

lion's share of the defense budget <sup>ever since</sup> - a share which no <sup>other</sup> air force in any other

country got. This country is a bombing country. That has a lot of implications. ✓

I'm going to mention just one.

In some ways, it means that we have fears that are somewhat unrealistic, though very

natural, because they are projections of our own predilections on other countries

that have bombers. Our assumption that Russias would acquire a strategic ✓

bombing force after the war was a projection that they were like us. Actually

~~anybody~~ nobody is like us, and Russia didn't acquire a strategic bombing force and we

weren't in the danger we assumed we were, <sup>up until that period.</sup> They went twenty years without a

strategic bombing force <sup>worthy of mention.</sup> We thought all that time, as some of you my age will ✓

remember, <sup>the bomber gap...</sup> These turned out to be total illusions, but they had a core of

sincerity <sup>as well as bluff to them,</sup> based on the assumption that Russia surely would not omit the ability

to bomb us <sup>if they could</sup> (not realizing to this day there is no other country in this world <sup>except England</sup>)

that thinks of bombing civilians as the natural way to fight a war.) We're the

country that believes that. So, we are peculiarly dangerous to other people when

we defend them <sup>by</sup> with our armed forces, because we defend them with bombers. Add

we're peculiarly dangerous to our enemy. Since <sup>BREZHNEV</sup> ~~Bresnev~~ in '64, we are very dangerous

to ourselves because <sup>we are confronting an enemy that now does</sup> ~~they now~~ have the capability to retaliate, which was not

true after 1942 with Truman. Yet, we go on, although <sup>1945?</sup> ~~its~~ perfectly aware that this

is now peculiarly dangerous. Let me suggest <sup>to this</sup> something of a psychology to this -

I said first there is a societal experience which is, in the whole, not in the

awareness of most people. How many people could honestly say that they have an

image of Americans as warriors, that emphasize bombing? ✓

One way

^ We do have an image, in Vietnam, is helicopters.

That's new.

^ Now the Russians are doing that in Afghanistan.

I've had that image of England and I assumed that it had something to do with their <sup>being an island, and not having the...</sup> ~~having their island~~ and perhaps the Americans too of having <sup>to do with America's emphasis too.</sup> ~~the Americans too of having~~ we don't have the experience of people being able to cross our boundaries.

D. E. — I'm sure there is a psychological aspect of the island <sup>nation in</sup> and the distancing of the enemy and there are various aspects, <sup>But there is</sup> one sufficient aspect, <sup>right away.</sup> when the bombing plane came in, when the air plane came in to the inventories at the end of World War II, in only two countries <sup>did it come into a country where the armed forces were</sup> ~~that was~~ not predominantly armies. Those were the two island powers of America and <sup>ENG-</sup> ~~island~~, where the navy was <sup>the</sup> predominant, <sup>power.</sup> In all the Continental countries, the liberal and the nonliberal ones, France, Germany, Russia, the armies managed to keep the air plane to its purposes: reconnaissance, artillery spotting, and close air support of army, and that was true of Hitler's Germany, <sup>strategic bombing,</sup> ~~in~~ Despite Gehring's admiration for the English, <sup>He wasn't allowed to build long-range</sup>

bombers. The two countries where the air force - where the army was rudimentary <sup>in</sup> ~~peace time, because of being island powers,~~ were able to burst loose and realize the real potential air power. I'll tell you

one thing about LeMay. There were different attitudes as to what air power could actually do and one of thing was based on the illusion, which I'm sure <sup>has</sup> ~~have~~ psychological roots, <sup>it persists</sup> ~~that exist~~ to this day, <sup>in air people & most</sup> most civilians who are enthralled with air, they have <sup>persistent</sup> ~~an~~ illusion in their minds that it is not only very powerful but very precise. This is almost a total illusion. The notion of surgical bombing has persisted throughout the history of the air <sup>power.</sup> ~~bombers~~. The bomber has never been surgical at all. It's an extremely imprecise instrument, <sup>So</sup> what LeMay discovered <sup>was</sup> ~~LeMay~~ faced up, (This is realism now, combined with a motivational aspect) LeMay faced up to the genuine limitations of the bomber and realized that <sup>It was</sup> ~~is~~ was good for only one thing; destroying cities, <sup>not good for destroying factories</sup> because it couldn't hit factories. There was an ~~immense~~ resistance to perceiving that <sup>institutionally.</sup> ~~year~~ after year they kept trying to hit factories and having not much effect.

LeMay finally realized that what they were really good at was killing people,  
and he was willing to do that. <sup>then he had this motivational aspect that</sup> Allowed him to use it that way. We can do that,  
if you do it right, <sup>if you optimize for it,</sup> The bomber can do that. So he turned the bomber - it meant  
using the bomber in a new way. It was a way the bomber could be used. The bomber  
was an instrument of destroying cities.